Walter Cullen





Rank: - Stoker, 1st Class

Number: - P/KX 122425

Service: - Royal Navy, H.M.S. Naiad

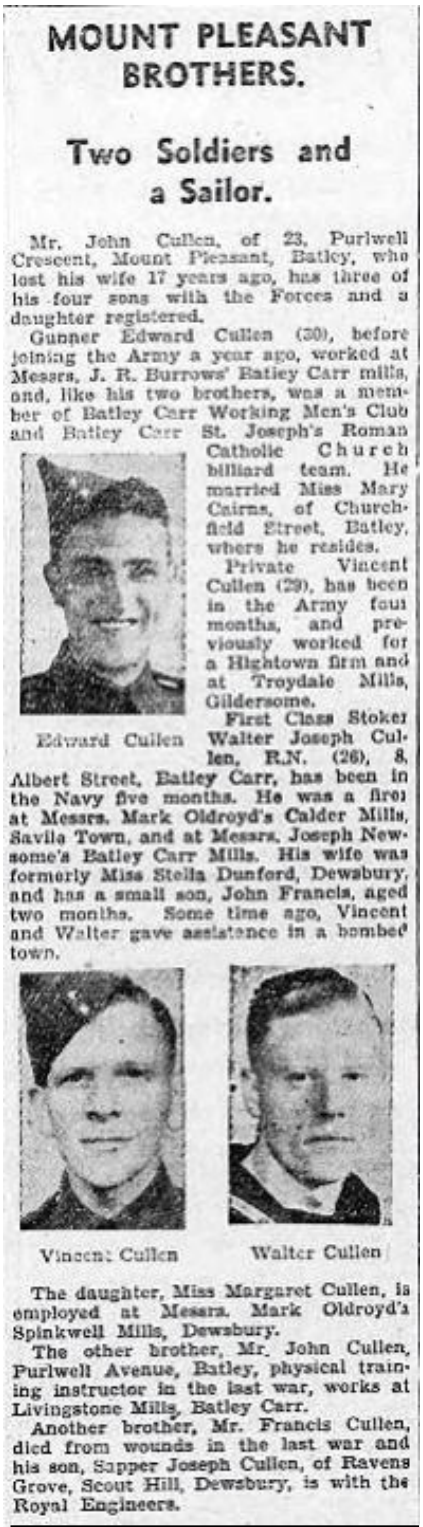
Died: - HMS Naiad sunk in action south of Crete 11/03/1942 Age: 26 years.

Memorial: - Portsmouth Naval Memorial Panel 69, Column 1.

Walter was born on 17 April 1915 the son of John and Bridget Cullen nee O'Neil who had married in 1891. Mary Ann born 1891 died aged 5 years, Francis 1893 died March 1925, Michael born 1894 died aged 19 months in February 1896, John 1895, Daniel 1897 died aged 3 months, James 1899 died in 1934, Thomas 1901 died April 1923 aged 21 years, Rose Ellen 1903 died in August aged 3

months, William 1905 died in April 1908, Mary 1906 died February 1924, Joseph 1908 died 1911, Patrick 1909 died aged 29 days, Edward 1910, Vincent Charles 1912, Walter, Margaret 1916. Bridget died in March 1924 when the family lived at 58, Cross King Street, Batley Carr. In 1939 the family lived at 23, Purlwell Crescent and Walter worked as a boiler firer. His father, John died in June 1943.

In 1940 Walter married Stella Dunford who came from Dewsbury. They lived at 8, Albert Street, Batley Carr and John Francis was born in June 1941. He worked at Messrs. Mark Oldroyd's, Calder Mills, Savile Town and then Messrs Joseph Newsome, Batley Carr Mills before joining the Navy in March 1941. He was one of three brothers and a sister who had joined the Forces. The brothers were all members of Batley Carr Working Mens' Club, and Batley Carr St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church billiard team. John was the first to join the Army in 1940, Walter joined the Navy and Vincent joined the Army in April 1941.



MOUNT PLEASANT BROTHERS.

Two Soldiers and a Sailor.

Mr. John Cullen, of 23, Purlwell Crescent, Mount Pleasant, Batley, who lost his wife 17 years ago, has three of his four sons with the Forces and a daughter registered.

Gunner Edward Cullen (30), before joining the Army a year ago, worked at Messrs. J. R. Burrows' Batley Carr mills, and, like his two brothers, was a member of Batley Carr Working Men's Club and Batley Carr St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church billiard team. He married Miss Mary Cairns, of Churchfield Street, Batley, where he resides.

Edward Cullen

Private Vincent Cullen (29), has been in the Army four months, and previously worked for a Hightown firm and at Troydale Mills, Gildersome.

First Class Stoker Walter Joseph Cullen, R.N. (26), 8, Albert Street, Batley Carr, has been in the Navy five months. He was a fireman at Messrs. Mark Oldroyd's Calder Mills, Savile Town, and at Messrs. Joseph Newsome's Batley Carr Mills. His wife was formerly Miss Stella Dunford, Dewsbury, and has a small son, John Francis, aged two months. Some time ago, Vincent and Walter gave assistance in a bombed town.

Vincent Cullen

Walter Cullen

The daughter, Miss Margaret Cullen, is employed at Messrs. Mark Oldroyd's Spinkwell Mills, Dewsbury.

The other brother, Mr. John Cullen, Purlwell Avenue, Batley, physical training instructor in the last war, works at Livingstone Mills, Batley Carr.

Another brother, Mr. Francis Cullen, died from wounds in the last war and his son, Sapper Joseph Cullen, of Ravens Grove, Scout Hill, Dewsbury, is with the Royal Engineers.

Batley News, 9 Aug 1941

On 9 March 1942, HMS Naiad sailed from Alexandria as flagship of a cruiser force under Kadm Vaan, consisting of the cruisers HMS Dido and HMS Euryakus and the destroyers H MS Kipling, HMS Kelvin, HMS Lively, HMS Sikh, MS Zulu, HMS Hasty, HMS Havock and HMS Hero to attack a reported damaged Italian cruiser, but this report proved to be wrong and the ships turned back to Alexandria together with HMS Cleopatra and HMS Kingston from Malta. The task force was unsuccessfully attacked several times by Italian torpedo planes and German bombers.

At 20.01 hours on 11 March, the HMS Naiad (Capt G. Grantham, DSO, RN) was hit by one torpedo from U-565 and sank north of Sidi Barrani, Egypt.

Walter is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity, Batley Carr, Lychgate Memorial and Batley War Memorial. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group